

ORANGES AND LEMONS

A taste of things to come

What does Oranges and Lemons mean to you? The old nursery rhyme perhaps? Jenny and Chris spent some of the summer looking at some of London's churches. Well, it was supposed to be the hidden churches trail – we never did finish it (some of those churches do hide themselves well and when it's a case of looking for a hiding church when you come across Spittlefields Market you sometimes get distracted) but whilst we were looking Jenny had the idea of visiting all the churches in the Oranges and Lemons rhyme. That idea started off a bit of research and we decided that was too easy – so we're going for the London Bells Nursery Rhyme, which according to some sources actually evolved into Oranges and Lemons because the smaller version was easier for children to remember.

There are 15 London Bells in the longer version so we'll be writing about them for each month in Magna during 2012. Yes we know there are only 12 months in a year but we'll fit the 15 in. The rhyme is really a story about London and her people and that's what we'll be exploring in the series of articles.

Although we've only just started it has turned up some fascinating facts and some speculation which we will share with you during 2012, also, some funny stories of our visits. Those of you who heard our Hidden Churches Talk at the Mothers' Union will know that it is not possible for Jenny and Chris to go anywhere together without getting into some kind of scrape.

Just to whet your appetite:

The date of the rhyme is not known, but there was a square dance dating back to 1665 called Oranges and Lemons and it is thought that the rhyme goes back this far, possibly longer.

We've a host of fascinating facts and what might appear to be quite a childlike rhyme really has some dark meanings too! Tales of torture and execution feature, so join us in next year's Magna for a tour of London's past.

Next Month – Oranges and Lemons say the bells of St. Clements

Jenny Quick and Chris Gentle

